



TO: Interested Parties  
FROM: Brock McCleary  
Date: April 14, 2015  
RE: Key Poll Findings – West Virginia Governor General Election Poll

In a series of hypothetical West Virginia Governor General election match-ups, our survey found Senator Joe Manchin leading all three potential Republican nominees.

### ***Electoral Environment***

Almost two-thirds of West Virginia voters say things in West Virginia are on the wrong track (64%). On the generic gubernatorial ballot, a generic Democrat has a narrow one-point lead over a Republican (43-42%). A Republican leads in the Bluefield media market (45-43%), a Democrat leads in Clarksburg (46-36%) and they are tied in Charleston (42%). A Republican earns stronger party support (79% of Republicans) than a Democrat (72% of Democrats). A Republican also leads on the generic ballot among Independents (32-29%).

### ***Candidate Images***

Early in the race, all of the potential gubernatorial candidates have positive images statewide. Senator Manchin has the strongest image, reaching 62% favorable. Republicans David McKinley (40% favorable, 31% unfavorable) and Patrick Morrissey (46% favorable, 32% unfavorable) are the only other candidates to reach 40% favorable. These three candidates are also the candidates with the highest hard name identification, the driving factor behind image ratings at this early stage.

### ***Manchin Ballots***

Senator Manchin leads all three potential Republican nominees by significant margins. David McKinley trails Manchin by the smallest margin of the three, at -17% (35-52%). He garners stronger support from Republicans than Cole and Morrissey, and thus is able to narrow the gap. He leads Manchin 60-30% among Republicans, while Manchin leads McKinley 70-18% among Democrats. Manchin leads State Senate President Bill Cole 54-32%. Cole's lack of hard name identification (image: 34% favorable, 30% unfavorable, 37% not sure) is a factor in this deficit. Cole does receive support from a majority of Republicans (leads Manchin 54-31%) but Manchin leads among Democrats 74-16%. Attorney General Patrick Morrissey faces the steepest deficit (-29%), largely due to lack of Republican support (only leads Manchin 47-38% among Republicans).

### ***If no Manchin, GOP Holds the Advantage***

On the remaining ballots, all three Republicans either tie or lead the other two potential Democratic nominees, Jeff Kessler and Booth Goodwin. Goodwin seems to be slightly more of a threat to the Republican candidates, trailing Cole by 2%, McKinley by 5% and pulling even with Morrissey. In comparison, Kessler trails Cole by 4%, McKinley by 10% and Morrissey by 3%.

#### ***METHODOLOGY:***

*The sample size for the survey is 702 likely voters in West Virginia and the margin of error is +/- 3.7%. Responses were gathered through land line interviews conducted using Interactive Voice Response (IVR). The survey was conducted April 9-11, 2015 by Harper Polling. The total percentages for responses may not equal 100% due to rounding.*